

**Grassroot Reachout & Networking in Rajasthan through
Consumer Action (GRANIRCA Project)**



**Synthesis Report of
Public Interface Meetings
(PIM Phase I, Year Three)**

April-May, 2012

Submitted by



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1. Background

CUTS in partnership with the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India, under the Consumer Welfare Fund (CWF), is implementing a project entitled 'Grassroots Reachout & Networking in Rajasthan through Consumer Action' (GRANIRCA) in 12 districts of Rajasthan. The purpose of this project is to enhance strong consumer movement at the grassroots in seven divisions of the State by ensuring an enabling environment, for protecting consumer interests, which, in turn, would contribute to the national interest.

The objective of the project is to generate a more capable consumer, by equipping him with knowledge and skills to build up proactive grassroots activists, through intensive training, capacity building and orientation programmes on consumer protection issues, to create an enabling environment at the grassroots.

The duration of the project is of three years, i.e. January 2010 to December 2012, covering all seven divisions of Rajasthan, comprising 12 districts, namely, Tonk, Chittorgarh, Kota, Bundi, Alwar, Banswara, Jodhpur, Jalore, Churu, Sikar, Dholpur and Dausa. The districts have been highlighted in the map below:

2. Introduction of PIMs

Under the project, two public interface meetings (PIMs) are required to be conducted annually in each of the 12 project districts. Overall, there were 72 PIMs to be conducted during three years of the project period. In the first year, 48 PIMs were organised against the proposed number of 24 and in the second year, it was 23. It was decided to conduct the PIMs during two phases as the previous years. 12 PIMs were organised in the first phase of the current year. It was decided to conduct PIMs at Block and *Panchayat* level to increase the outreach of PIMs.



The overall purpose of this first round PIM was to raise the level of awareness and voice of consumer rights further at the lower level, so that people become aware of their rights as consumers and the available redressal mechanism under the existing law.

3. Objectives of PIMs

The overall objectives of the PIMs were to:

- raise consumer awareness at the grassroots to build a strong consumer movement at the grassroots level in Rajasthan;
- share the existing appropriate mechanisms for exchange of information on measures of consumer protection, nationally and regionally;

- empower consumers to make informed choices and thereby protect their health and safety and get more value for money;
- obtain feedback from the people about the existing redressal mechanism condition, environment and accessibility; and
- bridge the gap between consumers and service providers/officials responsible for consumer protection.

4. Details of PIMs

As per feedback from the year 2 activities, PIMs were conducted at the block level. The details of the venue, along with dates of the meetings, number of participants and resource persons are mentioned in the table below.

Details of PIMs First Phase in the year 2012

S. N.	Partners District	Date	Venue	Participants	Resource Person
1	Manav Pragati Sansthan, Churu	April 05, 2012	Rajiv Gandhi meeting hall, <i>Gram Panchayat</i> Bidasar, (Block Sujangarh) District, Churu	30	✓ Meghram, Principal, Government School, Bidasar & PRI Members
2	K B Social Welfare Society, Dausa	April 06, 2012	Hotel Madhuvan, Dausa	72	✓ Virendra Sharma, Ward Member ✓ Santosh Godwal, Ward Member, <i>Nagar Palika</i> , Dausa ✓ Kamlesh Bohra Partner and local media persons
3	MMM Shikshan Evam Jan Sewa Sansthan, Tonk	April 07, 2012	Jain Dharm Shala, Todaraisingh, Tonk	40	✓ Gopal Saini, Partner and NGO Worker ✓ Shanti Nama and ✓ Prem Prakash, social workers
4	Jila Upbhokta Jagaran Samiti, Sikar	April 10, 2012	Rewasa Village, GP Dantaramgarh	72 Including (35 School children)	✓ Indira Chaudhry, Member, District Consumer Forum ✓ R K Bagariya (RKB) District Industry Officer, Sikar ✓ Deepak Saxena and Abhimanyu Singh
5	Samajik Vikas Samiti, Dholpur	April 11, 2012	Sarmathura	38	✓ Kanhaiya Lal Saini, <i>Tehsildar</i> , Sarmathura; ✓ Ashok Tripathi, Member, <i>Panchayat Samiti</i> , Baseri
6	Oxford Shikshan Prasikshan Vikas Sansthan, Kota	April 12, 2012	Mahfil Khana, Jangali Shah Baba Dargah, Kota	67	✓ Ram Bahadur Kulshreshtha, Member, District Consumer Forum, Kota ✓ Abdul Ajij Ansari, Chairman, District Waqf Committee ✓ Himmata Bai, <i>Sarpanch Babu</i> ,

S. N.	Partners District	Date	Venue	Participants	Resource Person
					<i>Gram Panchayat, Kasar</i>
7	Richmond's Kala Sahitya and Shikshan Society, Bundi	April 13, 2012	Government Boys PG Hostel, Devpura, Bundi	63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mukesh Dadhich, Member, District Consumer Forum ✓ Shiv Ram Jaat, Drug Inspector; Ishtihak Ajmeri, District Manager, Rajasthan State Food and Civil Supplies Corporation ✓ Girdhar Gopal, PA to District Judge ✓ Krishna Murari Meena, UDC; Consumer Department ✓ Raj Kumar Dadhich, Ex Member, District Consumer Forum, Bundi
8	CUTS Centre for Human Development (CUTS CHD), Chittorgarh	April 13, 2012	<i>Bharat Nirman Sewa Kendra, Bhensroadgarh</i>	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Kailash Puri Goswami, Reporter ✓ Shankar Lal Dhakar, <i>Sarpanch, Tamboliya Gram Panchayat</i>
9	Native Institute of Desert Awareness and Knowledge Society, Jodhpur	April 21, 2012	Balesar	55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Chenaram, <i>Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat, Durgavat, Block Balesar</i> ✓ Dharmendra Chaturvedi
10	Shubham Mahila Prashikshan Sansthan, Alwar	April, 23, 2012	Agrasen Dharmshala, Bansoor	35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Deepak Saxena ✓ Abhimanyu Singh ✓ Hemant Kumar ✓ Kishan Snehi
11	Sankalp Sansthan, Jalore	May 11, 2012	Government Secondary School, Kawrara, Aahore	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Jai Singh, <i>Sarpanch, Kawrara</i> ✓ Tarachand Gehlot, Principal, Government School ✓ Mohan Lal, Head Master, Government School ✓ Murari Lal Sharma ✓ Jagdip Prajapat ✓ Govind Ram Taylor of <i>Sankalp Sanstha</i>
12	Vagad Vikas Sansthan, Banswara4	May 19, 2012	Hotel Rara Avis, Banswara	62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ P S Ametha, General Manager BSNL ✓ Omkar Singh Kaviya, District Supply Officer ✓ Mani Khinchi, Assistant District Supply Officer Banswara ✓ Deepak Shrimal, Media person ✓ Ramavtar Mantri, Branch Manager LIC ✓ KK Jain, Assistant Branch Manager LIC ✓ Nemraj Shehlot ✓ Avdhesh Malot
	Total			609	

5. Proceedings of PIMs

Two members out of the GRANIRCA project team (**Deepak Saxena, Arjun Kant Jha, Dharmendra Chaturvedi, Jai Shree Soni & Abhimanyu Singh**) visited each district to help district partners in organising PIMs and played key role as a moderator and resource persons in PIMs.

Apart from the team, representatives of various departments related to consumer services and peoples representatives were invited as key speakers or external resource persons.

Registration of participants and distribution of resource material

As per the agenda, the meeting started with registration of participants and *distribution of resource material on consumer protection (The same agenda has been used during all the PIMs and it is annexed)*

Introductory Session

PIMs commenced with the welcome remarks by district partners in which they welcomed all the participants and guests present as well as team of CUTS and shared the agenda of the PIM.

Background and Introduction about the Project and Origin of CUTS

In this session, the project team talked about the project, its objectives and the purpose of the PIM etc. The team briefed the participants about the project's activities, which will further build a network of activists to take care of consumers at rural and urban areas. The team also provided a brief introduction of CUTS, its origin and working area.

Session on Consumer Rights

The session was focused on consumer rights provided under the Consumer Protection Act (COPRA) 1986, meaning of consumers and six rights given to consumers under this Act. The session was interactive and the discussion was in a very simple manner with citation of examples. Discussion took place on status of consumers after the completion of 25th years of the Act and the need for the GRANIRCA project. Duties of consumers were also discussed.

Information was provided on various consumer rights, present 3-tier redressal mechanism under COPRA Act, the procedure to file complaints etc. Apart from the Consumer Fora, there are several other fora to redress grievances of consumers in different sectors such as electricity, telecom, insurance, banking, etc. Participants were informed by the resource persons, based on the training manual and leaflet prepared under GRANIRCA. The role of various departments working at the district/block level is to safeguard different aspects of consumer interests and ensure healthy, safe, transparent, accountable and respectable life of consumers.

Open Session

Participants enthusiastically participated in the programme and raised queries in the open session. Most of the issues were related with the whereabouts of the different redressal bodies in government departments (electricity, water, telecommunication, PDS, etc.), irresponsive attitude of authorities, delay and non-availability of bills/support from local vendors.

Discussion on Future Strategies

Participants were informed of the existence of Complaints Handling, Information and Advisory Services (CHIAS) at office of the District Partner. The District Partner also made

an appeal to the participants to spread the message down the line for making the movement more vibrant, through participation of more people. Information was provided about forthcoming activities in the district, such as media and district level training workshops.

Closing Session

In the closing session, participants were asked to provide their feedback and suggestions and mention the systemic problems prevailing.

6. Highlights of the Interface

Some key observations and highlights of PIMs:

- Overwhelming response from media, youths, *panchayat* representatives and women.
- Majority of participants were unaware of consumer rights, availability of redressal mechanism and procedure of filing complaint at their respective districts.
- Unawareness towards packed items, standardisation and food adulteration was prevalent at rural areas.
- Public Distribution System (PDS), electricity and mobile phone emerged as one of the main problematic areas among other district level departments.
- At most, of the places people at the level of *Zila Pramukh, Zila Up Pramukh, Chairman, Sarpanch, Pradhan, Tehsildar, principals of schools* and members of District Consumer Forum etc. actively participated.
- Participants raised good points and shown keen interest on several issues.

7. Some Burning Issues/Suggestions

- Consumers should be strengthened and made aware so that unfair trade practices would automatically stop
- Wherever, laboratory test is required by consumer in legal proceedings, he has to pay phenomenal charges and at some point of time, he is not even in a condition to go for that, so these laboratory charges should be waived off
- Auto rickshaws are not running on meters due to less strictness by RTOs. Fare rates fixed for them needs to be more transparent
- Fee levied on consumers by consumer fora should be waived off because many a times consumers fighting for a small cause, fee of even Rs 100 seems sort of a burden on him.
- Error margins in packaging items are very high in non-standard packaging items, so has to be rationalised
- State government has to activate CWF in order to make it more useful to local VCO
- Consumer fora to move down up to the level of sub-division for wider outreach
- There is a need to run food safety and labeling awareness campaigns
- Filing procedures has to be simpler in order to give relief to a layman
- A medical board should be appointed to examine cases of medical abuses and negligence

- State and district level protection councils need to be activated with seriousness and their work and functioning to be overseen by a committee set up by CCPC. Non-functioning of these councils is violation of Act.
- There should not be too much emphasis on COPRA. There are other laws, such as Weights and Measures Act; PFA Act etc.

8. Some Success Stories

During a couple of PIMs, partners mentioned some cases, which were resolved through their interventions:

(i) Madhumati, a resident of Jodhpur purchased a refrigerator of Haier brand. After four months, the cooling system and the door of the refrigerator were not working properly. She complained about the defect to the concerned agency. The mechanic visited and repaired the cooling system but the door was still not locked properly due to the defect in its air seal system.

She regularly complained the dealer for the defect, but they were not responding to the complaint. Getting annoyed with this she approached our district partner Native Institute of Desert Awareness and Knowledge Society (NIDAN) for help and as per the advice she register complaint on Toll free no. of the company and received a complaint number. After contacting the concerned authority continuously for the four months, the company agreed to replace old door with the new one. The door was sent to her but it was not matching the size of the refrigerator so it was sent back and the next time the door's condition was even worst than the previous one. She asked the company to replace the refrigerator, but the representatives of the company did not give her a satisfactory reply.

At last, with the help of representative of the organisation, she went to the dealer and asked to replace the refrigerator with the new one or else she will file a case in the consumer forum. Seeing this dealer said that if, the refrigerator is not repaired within 15 days he will replace it. Talking to the company after 15 days, they further asked for more time. The dealer himself took the initiative, replaced the refrigerator with the new one, and assured her to solve any further problems in future also.

(ii) Ramkishore Dewra, a resident of Jodhpur used to take LPG cylinder from the agency's godowns, but he was charged home delivery charge Rs 8 by the owner of the godown. After contacting the organisation, he came to know that as he was taking cylinder from the godown itself instead of provision for home delivery, so he was entitled to get back the delivery charge. After he came to know about this he asked the agency to refund his money but the agency misguided him by saying that godown will pay back the money whereas the godown people said that he have to come with a coupon from the agency demanding the refund of money. After his many unsuccessful efforts, the organisation advised him to collect the receipt coupon of Rs 8 from the godown whenever he takes the cylinder next time.

Further, he went to the agency, demanded the money and informed about consumer's rights under COPRA, but the agency ignored him. The representatives from the organisation visited the agency, informed about the Act, and said that this is the case of forgery and consumer can file a case against the agency in the consumer court. With the advocacy of the organisation, the agency agreed to refund the hard-earned money of the people. Now Ramkishore Dewra is a satisfied consumer and he is trying to empower the people by making them aware of their rights.

**Grassroot Reachout and Networking in Rajasthan through
Consumer Action (GRANIRCA)**

Public Interface Meeting-Phase I (Year Three)

Agenda

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of GRANIRCA and Objectives of PIM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address by Chief Guest/Speakers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brief introduction of COPRA and its important features• Consumer Rights in detail• Brief on complaints filing in consumer forums• Brief on complaints to be filed to various service providers before going to consumer forum.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Issues like Adulteration, PDS shops, gas agencies, farmers as consumers and weights and measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open discussions/Public Interface between consumers and service providers and a simulation exercise
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vote of Thanks and the Way Forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High Tea

9. Glimpses of PIMs



10. Media Coverage



वासवाड़ा। जनसंवाद कार्यक्रम में मार्गदर्शन देते हुए जिला रसद अधिकारी ओंकारसिंह कविया।

उपभोक्ताओं की जिज्ञासाओं को किया

जन संवाद कार्यक्रम

न्यूज सर्विस
वासवाड़ा, 19 मई। वागड़ विकास संस्थान द्वारा कर्ट्स संस्थान के माध्यम से आयोजित जन संवाद कार्यक्रम में ग्रामीण क्षेत्र के उपभोक्ताओं की जिज्ञासाएं बढ़ती ही गईं। यह कार्यक्रम इतना रोचक बन गया कि एक के बाद एक सवालोंने जागरुकता की मिसाल कायम की। कार्यक्रम में दूरसंचार विभाग के उपभोक्ता अधिकारी ए.एस. आमेटा ने

रिवेट की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने बताया कि दो सौ कनेक्शन जो बंद हो गये थे वे चालू कराए गये हैं। एलआईसी के रामावतार मंत्री ने एलआईसी की विभिन्न सेवाओं की जानकारी दी। उन्होंने बताया कि सेवाओं में विस्तार की दृष्टि से परतापुर के बाद बागीदौरा शाखा भी खोली गई है। उन्होंने बताया कि लोगों पर अति विश्वास होने की प्रवृत्ति के कारण ही व्यक्ति धोखे का शिकार बनता है। इस अवसर पर जिला रसद अधिकारी ओंकारसिंह कविया ने उपभोक्ता जागृति सप्ताह के दौरान उपभोक्ता जागृति कार्यक्रमों की

लेकिन जागरुकता के अभाव में इसका लाभ कम ही लोग ले पा रहे हैं। इस अवसर पर जिला उपभोक्ता संरक्षण परिषद के सदस्य एवं वरिष्ठ पत्रकार दीपक श्रीमाल ने जिला मंच, राज्य एवं राष्ट्रीय आयोग की विस्तृत जानकारी दी। उन्होंने कहा कि हम अधिकारों तक तभी पहुंच पाएंगे जब हमें अपने कर्तव्यों का भान होगा। उन्होंने बताया कि पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री भारत रत्न स्व. राजीव गांधी ने 1986 में देश में इस कानून को लागू करवाया था। इस अवसर पर कर्ट्स के दीपक सक्सेना ने कर्ट्स की स्थापना एवं उद्देश्यों पर प्रकाश डाला। उन्होंने बताया कि उपभोक्ता

सामने आने वाले हैं। व अभिमन्यु ने बताया कि ने उपभोक्ता जागृति रखा और मार्चिस की से आगे बढ़ते हुए दिशा में कई आ गये हैं। इस अ राजकुमार जैन सम्वन्धी कई उ के सचिव अवर् उपभोक्ताओं खड़े कर उन् भागीदार बना मधु वाघवा- संस्था के

जन संवाद बैठक का आयोजन

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बोराव में शुक्रवार को भारत निर्माण सेवा केन्द्र में कर्ट्स की ओर से आयोजित जन संवाद बैठक में उपभोक्ता समस्याओं के निराकरण के लिए उपभोक्ताओं को जागरुक किया गया। ब्लॉक के प्रभारी कैलाश पुरी गोस्वामी ने बताया कि पंचायत स्तर पर उपभोक्ता चेतना केन्द्र सदस्यों को प्रशिक्षित करने के उद्देश्य से बैठक का आयोजन किया गया। इस दौरान गंगाधर सोलंकी, धाकड़, रमेश लाल आदि ने

ग्रामीण उपभोक्ताओं में जागरुकता पर बल

अलवर। उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य एवं नागरिक आपूर्ति मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार की ग्रैनिका परियोजना के अन्तर्गत जयपुर की कर्ट्स की सहयोगी संस्था शुभम महिला प्रशिक्षण संस्थान की ओर से जनसंवाद कार्यक्रम का आयोजन जिले के बानसूर स्थित अग्रसेन भवन के सभागार में किया गया। इस मौके पर कर्ट्स ने कार्यक्रम समन्वयक दीपक सक्सेना तथा कार्यक्रम अधिकारी अभिमन्युसिंह सहित वरिष्ठ समाजसेवी किशन स्नेही तथा हेमन्त कुमार असीम खां आदि ने अपने विचारों से ग्रामीण

उपभोक्ताओं में जागरुकता का प्रसार किया। कार्यक्रम में बानसूर और आसपास के गांवों- ढाणियों के उपभोक्ताओं ने उत्साह से भाग लिया। इस मौके पर कर्ट्स के कार्यक्रम अधिकारी अभिमन्युसिंह ने ग्रामीण उपभोक्ताओं को ग्रैनिका परियोजना के महत्वपूर्ण आवश्यकता से अवगत कराया तथा उनके कानूनी अधिकारों एवं कर्तव्यों पर विस्तार से प्रकाश डाला। कर्ट्स के कार्यक्रम समन्वयक दीपक सक्सेना ने इस मौके पर वाद प्रस्तुत करने की समुची प्रक्रिया से अवगत करते हुए

ग्रामीण उपभोक्ताओं द्वारा वाद कार्यक्रम के अन्त में संस्थान की प्रस्तुत करने हेतु आसपास के ग्रामों पर प्रकाश डाला तथा हेतु राशि की सीमा देते हुए कहा कि 2 की राशि की क्षा जिला मंच उपभो लाख से एक क राज्य आयोग त अधिक की राि आयोग में प्रस्तु है। इसके साथ किशन स्नेही वस्तु या क्रय की आवश्यक

कार्यक्रम के अन्त में संस्थान की सचिव श्रीमती सुशीला देवी ने सभी उपभोक्ताओं को जागरुक कर रहे हुए

उपभोक्ताओं के हितों की दी जानकारी

आहोरा. निकटवर्ती कवराड़ा गांव स्थित सामुदायिक सभा भवन में भारत सरकार के उपभोक्ता मामले, खाद्य एवं नागरिक आपूर्ति विभाग के तत्वावधान में कर्ट्स एवं संकल्प संस्थान की ओर से संचालित ग्रैनिका परियोजना के तहत जन संवाद का आयोजन सरपंच जयसिंह की मौजूदगी में हुआ। जन संवाद के दौरान परियोजना अधिकारी अर्जुनकांत, अभिमन्युसिंह एवं संकल्प सचिव महेश ओझा ने उपभोक्ता संरक्षण अधिनियम 1986 के विभिन्न प्रावधानों के बारे में जानकारी दी। इस मौके पर गौविन्दराम टेलर, मुरारिलाल शर्मा, जगदीश, ताराचंद गहलोत, मोहनलाल लोहार, एएनएम इंद्रा विश्नाई और सुनिता सहित कई महिलाएं मौजूद थीं। जन संवाद में कवराड़ा, मानपुरा, नारवणा भूती, पादरली, खारा सहित कई गांवों की महिलाओं ने भाग लिया।